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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001847

SIPDIS

STATE FOR P (MULL), NEA/IR, PM/IAEA, ISN/RA (NEPHEW), AF/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2019

TAGS: [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [IR](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA PROFESSES LITTLE TO NO INFLUENCE WITH IRAN
ON IAEA ISSUES

REF: A. STATE 103219

[1](#)B. STATE 99897

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McAnulty
for reasons in Sections 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) PolOffs briefed Foreign Ministry (MFA) First United Nations Director Maria Laose October 6 on the outcome of Geneva talks with Iran (Ref A) and delivered a non-paper on Iran's covert uranium enrichment facility (Ref B). In response, Laose professed that her government had "no influence" with Iran on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issues. She added, however, that Nigeria held more sway with Iran within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), where both are members. Moreover, Laose pledged that the Nigerian Government (GON) would pursue IAEA issues at the UN Security Council (UNSC) should it gain election to a two-year rotating UNSC seat. She claimed support for GON candidacy from both the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), predicting that African nations not supporting GON candidacy "simply won't vote" October 15.

[1](#)2. (C) Laose also expressed appreciation for "positive shifts" in U.S. policy on Iran's right to nuclear energy. Nigeria, she remarked, found herself in a situation similar to Iran, where "we have plenty of oil, but need alternate forms of energy." Laose emphasized her government's firm belief in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), noting that her government had joined a dozen other nations in voting "no" on limiting the treaty's deadline, because the NPT has "kept us away from nuclear war." Indeed, she said, the GON wanted all countries outside the NPT to join. While underscoring that her government would ask Iran to live up to its NPT commitments, she encouraged governments to emphasize the IAEA's "technical" work over political aspects.
MCCULLOUGH